

February, 2001

Volume XVIII

Number 2

SPARK GAP

M A R C

Paulette Wendt – KB9SRC SK

Johnson County amateur radio operators were greatly saddened by the passing of **Paulette Wendt, KB9SRC**, on January 22, 2001. Paulette was a long time member and supporter of the club, and wife of founding member **Dave Wendt KA9OOH**.

Paulette was a regular attendee of the Wednesday Night Supper Group, and a wonderful person. A scholarship has been set up in her memory. She will be greatly missed by all of us.

MARC Member Active on HF From Florida

Those of you on HF may be interested in contacting a long time club member. **Bob Doles, WB9AYB**, has written Joe Rogers and given the following information...

"I hope to be on 14.347 +/- around 1:30 - 2:00 p.m. Sat. Feb 3. Otherwise, I hang out on 17mtrs around 18.120 - 18.140 on various afternoons. Can also be found on 30mtrs: 10.120 - 10.115 from time to time"

Let's fill Bob in on all the wonderful weather he is missing up here in Indiana.

-KB9UJE

***The next club meeting will be
Saturday February 17, at the
EOC. Hope to see you there!***

The Mid-State Amateur Radio Club

Membership

The Mid-State Amateur Radio Club is based in Franklin, Indiana. Membership is open to all amateur radio operators and other interested persons.

Club meetings are conducted on the third Saturday of each month in the training room of the Johnson County Emergency Operations Center at 1100 Hospital Road in Franklin, IN.

Membership dues are \$18.00 per year for full members. Other types of membership are available.

Amateur Radio Operator License testing is offered following the club meeting during the months of March through November.

The club maintains an open repeater on the 2-meter band at 146.835 MHz. Each full member has access to the repeater and autopatch.

Membership dues payment and change of address should be mailed to the club treasurer at the address listed below.

Newsletter

The Spark Gap is the monthly club newsletter. Articles and information that would be of interest to the club members are welcome. Information may be submitted by E-mail or by mailing to the club address listed below.

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(KF9LQ)

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(KB9HSE)

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(N9SIU)

Bill Goodall
(K9DBY)

Dave Wendt
(KA9OOH)

Matthew Payne
(KB9UJE)

Larry Turner
(KB9PWN)

Other

Other

Hershel Saylor
(WD9GMM)

Al Soltis
(WA9ZET)

Appointments

Appointments

Pending

Pending



MARC, PO Box 836, Franklin, IN 46131

A SPECIAL SERVICE CLUB OF THE ARRL



Running a Weather Net

Springtime is coming. Thunderstorms. Tornadoes. Floods. Weather nets. Most of us have listened to 2-meter local weather nets; many have participated; a few, like me one night last summer, have run them. Here are some of the things you'll need to know if you ever see empty Net Control shoes winking "FILL US" in your direction.

- 1) You can do it -- if you're ready. Anybody can start an informal weather net during threatening weather. An official Skywarn net, however, occurs only when the National Weather Service (NWS) specifically directs that one begin -- but again, **any** ham can start a Skywarn net. If a civil emergency should cause RACES to be activated, **only** RACES members may participate. But that's someone else's article. **Skywarn is not RACES.**
- 2) When to start a net? Listen to the Central Indiana regional Skywarn net at 146.70(-) during threatening weather. If NWS is worried, this net will be up and you get an overview of what's going on. If NWS wants Johnson County Skywarn up, they say it on 146.70.
- 3) Announce on 146.835 something like the following: "CQ Skywarn, CQ Skywarn, the National Weather Service has directed that the Johnson County Skywarn weather net be activated at this time." Let's assume that after a few seconds it's apparent that you will be Net Control. You have a lot of start-up activity to do now; get your ham logbook and start down the checklist:
 - a. Take check-ins. Write down callsign, location, and whether they're base or mobile.
 - b. Determine your back-up Net Control. The weather may take you down.
 - c. Determine a liaison. This ham (not you) passes information to and from 146.70 and the NWS. Your liaison should be able to monitor both 146.835 and 146.70 simultaneously.
 - d. Announce the back-up repeater. For Johnson County it is the 145.11 repeater.
 - e. Give a quick rundown of what people should report. The following are always to be passed along to NWS: tornadoes, funnel clouds, rotating wall clouds, hail the size of a penny or larger, 50+ mph sustained winds, flash flooding or running water across roads, and heavy rain (1 inch/hour rate or greater). If healthy trees are getting blown down that is also reportable, but the NWS will want to know the trunk diameter to judge the wind strength. Net participants should also report lesser conditions, but the list above is what NWS wants to hear about.
- 4) That's the immediate, start-of-net activity. Now you sit back and wait for reports. Every five or ten minutes, announce that the net is still up. Request any new check-ins. Request that people who change their status (check out, go mobile, go base, whatever) to please notify Net Control. Politely ask non-net repeater users to try simplex or another repeater.
- 5) Every half-hour or so, have your liaison give a regional summary of what 146.70 is saying. This is a good time to recap what to report and what the back-ups are.

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- 6) One person should not be Net Control for too long. After an hour or so, troll for your replacement.
- 7) Eventually, the situation will improve and the NWS will let your liaison know that Johnson County should stand down. Thank everyone, consult your notes, and report through your liaison the following:
 - a. net start time, end time, and duration,
 - b. total number of check-ins, subdivided by how many were base and how many mobile

Be sure to thank everyone again and announce that the net is officially down. By this time, you'll probably be desperately hoping that the front or whatever is through and there won't be another call-up in an hour or so. Keep listening to 146.70 just in case.

If things get exciting, you'll wish you had some or all of the following:

- back-up power (batteries, an inverter, etc)
- a good map of Johnson County
- a list of the Skywarn net frequencies for all surrounding counties
- the correct procedures for how, when, and what to contact the civil authorities about
- a clue on how to direct mobile volunteers to track storm features
- God's mercy and support

Other places to find more information are the **Central Indiana Skywarn** web site at www.cisw.com and in the **ARRL Operating Manual** under the Emergency Communications chapter.

If you want to be Net Control, be prepared. YOUR good job may start the alert sirens sooner and save lives.

-KB9SKI

From the Editor

If things look a little rough this month, and your newsletter is a little late getting to you, I apologize. I have been experimenting with a new computer and operating system, and I am still a little "green" at using the word processor on this computer. As time progresses, I am sure that the newsletter will again reach the level it was.

As always, your comments and article submissions are appreciated. You could be the next featured author in **YOUR** club's newsletter! Send all comments or submissions to editor@midstatehams.org and I will give them prompt attention.

-KB9UJE

"RADIO RAGE" HAZARDOUS TO HAM RADIO HOLLINGSWORTH SAYS

Entering his third year spearheading the FCC's Amateur Radio enforcement effort, Special Counsel for Amateur Radio Enforcement Riley Hollingsworth says "radio rage" could become a bigger danger to the future of Amateur Radio than rule breaking.

"It's the infighting and arguments and juvenile spats," Hollingsworth said this week. "That's going to come back to haunt us if we don't just grow up. It will do the service in, if the ham community doesn't put a stop to it."

Hollingsworth said that he's encouraged that the FCC's enforcement program has the support of "99.9%" of the amateur community and that the vast majority of hams follow the rules. But, he said that radio rage in the form of such things as on-air squabbles or frequency fights can degrade the bands just as quickly as outright rule breaking. "The FCC can't do anything about that," he said. "It's up to the amateur community."

Hollingsworth said that while much radio rage technically is not illegal, it reflects poorly on Amateur Radio and can balloon into an enforcement issue. More important, he said, rude or intemperate on-air behavior might provide just the sort of ammunition that an entity seeking additional spectrum will use against Amateur Radio.

Hollingsworth predicted that the departure January 19 of FCC Chairman William Kennard (see "FCC CHAIRMAN WILLIAM KENNARD RESIGNS" below) and the changing of the guard in the White House the next day will not alter the course of the current amateur enforcement effort. He said he sees nothing but positive changes ahead.

"I'm willing to bet my SX-115 that we won't miss a beat," he said, referring to one of his latest acquisitions of vintage ham gear, "as long as the amateur community lets it be known it still wants enforcement."

Hollingsworth said it was pressure from the ARRL and individual amateurs that prompted the resumption of amateur enforcement in 1998 during Kennard's tenure, "and it's the type of program that needs that continual pressure to keep it going," he added. Overall complaints are down, Hollingsworth said, "but no one can be complacent."

WISH-TV Meteorologist to Speak at Next Meeting

When it comes to covering severe storms WISH-TV meteorologist Ken Brewer has been there. He may even have the T-shirts showing his close encounter with Hurricane Earl in 1998. While forecasting weather at WCTV in Tallahassee Ken provided LIVE coverage of the F-3 tornadoes that raked across northern Florida.

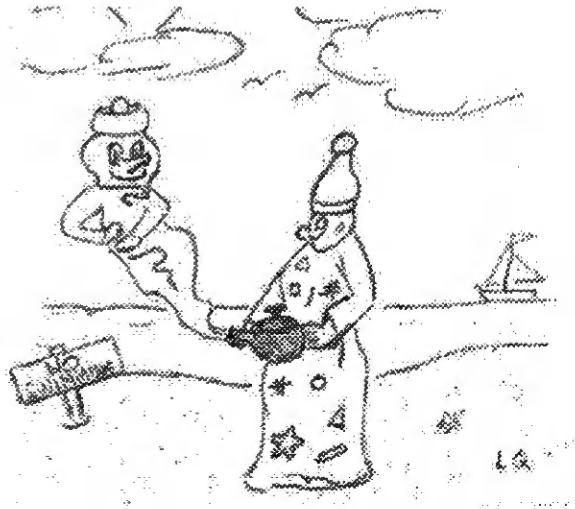
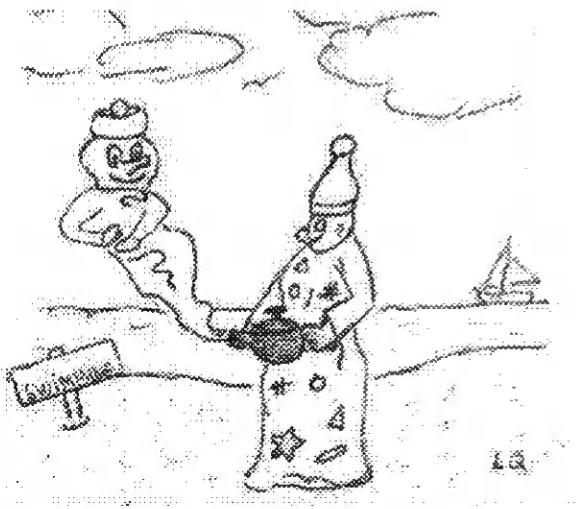
For nearly ten years Ken has been studying, reporting, forecasting, and experiencing the often severe and volatile weather conditions of the state of Florida, from its northern to southern borders. Ken Brewer joined News 8 and The WISH-TV Forecasters in October 2000 as the primary meteorologist for the 6 p.m. and 11 p.m. weekend newscasts.

Saturday February 17th, Ken will bring his severe weather expertise to the Johnson county EOC for a look at the up coming severe weather season in Indiana.

Bring a friend and enjoy a morning of weather facts from one of Indiana's top meteorologists, Ken Brewer.

-W8ISH

Can YOU Tell the Difference?



-KF9LQ

Editorial - Missed Opportunity

When it comes to emergencies most hams pride themselves on being ready to lend a helping ham. Who else has the capability of throwing together a communications network that rivals the most advanced commercial systems. Unfortunately, it's those same commercial systems that are working to take our valuable frequencies away from the Amateur Radio service. A service designed to communicate near and far.

It's time we start to use those frequencies before we start to lose those frequencies. Maybe it's time we seize opportunities to help our community while in need. One of those rare opportunities occurred earlier this month in Clark Township. A Rocklane resident walked away from her home and was reported missing for over a week. Local residents, county police and fire personnel searched the area close to her home on several occasions. They could have used more people. They could have benefited from the manpower and communication resources of Johnson county amateur radio operators.

We missed an opportunity to help save a life and to make Amateur Radio a valuable communications resource in Johnson County. We have the equipment and the frequencies. We need to use it before we lose it. According to ARRL insiders, it's not a threat; it's a promise of things to come.

-W8ISH

FEBRUARY'S BECOME A DUD IN THE WEATHER DEPARTMENT

As most of you know February is a transitional month for weather in the Hoosier State. We will start to see the changeover from winter to spring take place in the next several weeks. The past several years this February transition has made very little noise in the weather department though.

Climatologically speaking we average close to 8" of snow for the month, but the past several years have produced some wimpy results in that category. Last year turned out to be the 10th warmest February on record, with an average temperature near 39° and only 1.8" of snow. We're only three years removed from one of the least snowiest February months on record: 0.6" in 1998.

Tornadoes have also become a rare commodity during February. In fact it's been over 8 years since the last twister touched down between state lines during this month. So you get the picture...we're due for a rough February.

Whether or not that's going to happen is yet to be determined. We do know the influence of La Nina & El Nino on Indiana, which has been the reason for altered atmospheric patterns & deviations in recent seasonal storm tracks, will not be a factor this year. This means we're not going to see the jet stream behave sporadically like years past. So we are expecting seasons to return more toward climatological standards. The end result should make for a more active next couple of months. Time will tell!

-Sean Ash
WISH-TV NEWS 8

FCC CHAIRMAN WILLIAM KENNARD RESIGNS

FCC Chairman William E. Kennard stepped down from that post January 19. Kennard, a Democrat, said he was leaving the office with great pride in the FCC's accomplishments, and with deep gratitude for having had an opportunity to serve the American public.

Kennard's resignation was expected, once the AOL-Time Warner mega-merger had received FCC approval. That happened January 11. It's been widely speculated that President George W. Bush will name Republican FCC commissioner Michael Powell—the son of Secretary of State-Designate Gen. Colin Powell—to replace Kennard as FCC chairman.

The agency's first African-American chairman, Kennard presided over the FCC during a period when the FCC implemented legislation to bring competition to communications markets. During his three-year tenure, Kennard promoted competition

and consumer choice, encouraged the rollout of broadband and digital technologies, expanded access to technology and streamlined and revamped the FCC, including creation of the Enforcement Bureau.

Kennard made bridging the Digital Divide a top priority. During his tenure, the FCC implemented the E-Rate program, which connected 95% of the nation's schools and more than one million classrooms to the Internet. Kennard also worked to expand access to all Americans.

"We must bring the benefits of the Digital Age to all Americans," said Kennard. "From the business districts to the barrios; from those with every advantage to those with disabilities; from the young to the old; from suburban enclaves to the rural heartland."

His achievements include establishing a Disabilities Rights Office at the FCC, bringing telephone service to over one million new low-income Native Americans on tribal lands, and creating the new Low-Power FM radio service for school, church, and community use.

For the next few months, Kennard will serve as a senior fellow of the Aspen Institute Communications and Society Program in Washington DC.

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Karate is a form of martial arts in which people who have had years and years of training can, using only their hands and feet, make some of the worst movies in the history of the world.

Dave Berry